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Persia: A Poem

By
John Malcolm

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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To Mr. Thomson
from his friend
the Author.

PERSIA:

A POEM.

With Notes.

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The Author of this short Poem is aware, that he repeats a very common-place Preface to such Trifles when he states, that it was written without the remotest view to Publication: but this is, nevertheless, the fact. The description he has endeavoured to give of Persia and its Inhabitants, was at first only meant for the amusement of a Friend. It is now given to the Public under an impression that it has, from its subject, something both of novelty and interest, and that it may pretend to that species of merit which belongs to a Sketch taken on the spot, in which the truth of the Outline makes some amends for the absence of that skill which is necessary to produce a finished Picture.

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PERSIA.

From verdant Isles, that near th' Equator glow,
To where bright Asia's robe is fring'd with snow;
Wide o'er th' expanse where spreads the eastern sky,
Of Albion's race the conquering banners fly.
But not the flame which fires Ambition's breast, 5
Nor pleasure mantled in her golden vest,
Nor softest ease, with gay seductive smile,
Can wean the Patriots from their native Isle.
Not with more joy the feather'd tribe take wing
From arctick snows, to meet the opening spring, 10
Than Britain's sons from Asia's regions fly,
To court repose beneath a northern sky.
E'en now a Wanderer, Persia, quits thy strand,
And seeks, with filial hope, his native land.

As o'er thy scenes a parting glance he throws, 15
While yet his memory with the picture glows,
He tries to paint, with truth's unerring aid,
The various regions he so late survey'd:
Nor vain the task, should his faint tints impart
One useful lesson to a brother's heart, 20
Fan the pure flame the Patriot's breast that warms,
And, by strong contrast, give BRITANNIA charms.
Hail, sea-girt Goddess! o'er whose emerald isles
Immortal Liberty triumphant smiles;
Hast thou a son who knows not how to prize 25
The wond'rous blessings that from order rise?
Bid him depart—o'er PERSIA's mountains roam,
And learn the value of his matchless home:
View millions by a Despot kept in awe,
His nod their mandate, and his will their law: 30
Ne'er on that land has Freedom shed one ray,
By Fate decreed to feel tyrannic sway:
Fierce tempers shake, and often burst the chain,
But the base metal soon unites again:

When cruel power provokes th' avenging sword, 35
The slaves but seek to raise another lord.

Yet, thro' the mist of ages past we trace
The dazzling glories of a wond'rous race:
FERDOSI's[a] song, and sculptur'd rocks, still tell,
How RUSTUM conquer'd, and how SOHRAB fell; 40
How great JEMSHEED[b] all other Kings outshone,
Who tried on earth to raise a heavenly throne.
And still, PERSEPOLIS, thy ruins grand
Shed a proud lustre o'er a fallen land:
Like the dark shade of PERSIA's ancient power, 45
On her degenerate sons thou seem'st to lower.

Tho' fair SHIRAZ[c] each gaudy charm displays,
She mourns, like thee, the fame of former days.
Mark yonder tombs, where crowds adore the shrine
Of native genius, bless'd with art divine: 50
These are her glory! and in every age
All praise her poet, all admire her sage.
To wildest notes his harp her HAFIZ[d] strung,
And sweet his music as the flowers he sung:

In beauteous robes, by SADI's[e] hand array'd, 55
Truth show'd her form, and Monarchs woo'd the Maid:
With those whose power had all restraints defied,
His maxims oft the place of laws supplied.

Lo! ISFAHAN[f], of faded splendour vain,
In form majestic rises from the plain: 60
At distance view'd, the scene is glittering bright —
Domes, arches, minarets, confuse the sight:
Mid the tall avenue's protracted shade,
Proud royal mansions seem but half display'd;
While spreading orchards from the view conceal 65
All that might want or misery reveal:
But, seen more near, the illusive vision flies,
And dreary ruins 'mid the prospect rise;
The mouldering palace, and the weed-grown bower,
Where the dark brow relax'd from tyrant power, 70
And smil'd; while spring, cloth'd in her rosy vest,
Shed her sweet influence o'er the troubled breast.
Where'er we turn, where'er our eyes are cast
Some scene arising speaks of glories past:

By chance directed, we unconscious tread 75
Near the proud dome that canopies the dead;
Or heedless wander where enthron'd in state,
By chiefs encircled, glorious ABBAS[g] sat.
Tho' thy high towers to former fame are lost,
No rival city can thy riches boast: 80
Where glittering splendour rear'd its gorgeous head,
The stream of useful industry has spread:
But wealth alone no meed of praise can claim,
And truth forbids to give thee higher fame:
Pleas'd we survey those silver portals[h] wide, 85
Which grace thy College with their massy pride:
But Science flies the spot where bigots rule,
Nor brooks the fetters of th' ARABIAN school.
Thy sons, inglorious, shun the tented field,
They love the shuttle more than lance or shield; 90
Their joy is rest, their toil is peaceful trade,
They court not fame, in danger's garb array'd;
And, like those worms which scattered round them lie,
They give their silken webs, and nameless die.

Yet e'en this race have felt the magic power 95
That wakens nations to bright glory's hour;
A falling dynasty[i] had weigh'd thee down,
Sunk were thy glories with the SUFI's crown;
Thy fields were trampled by a TURKISH host,
And RUSSIAN banners brav'd the CASPIAN coast; 100
The rude AFFGHAN, a fierce destroyer, came,
And fill'd thy streets with blood, thy halls with flame.
But short his triumph:—Hark! that sound afar,
Is NADIR's[k] shout, that calls thy sons to war:
The daring robber, born to high renown, 105
First saves his country, and then grasps its crown.
At his approach the TURKISH Crescent flies,
The RUSSIAN Eagle seeks his native skies;
Th' AFFGHANS regain their mountains in despair,
But, close pursued, they find no refuge there: 110
On their fair fields th' avenger's fury falls,
And NADIR's standard floats on CABUL's walls.
Thence forward borne on rapine's vulture wing,
He rends th' imperial wreath from INDIA's King;

Strikes prostrate DEHLY with relentless sword, 115
And grants the ruin to its humbled lord.
O'ershadowing clouds arise — what pencil bold
Shall the red scenes which clos'd his life unfold,
Paint his deep guilt, portray his maniac rage,
Show thousands slain his fury to assuage? — 120
A suffering world to Heaven for mercy calls;
Beneath the dagger's point the Tyrant falls!

Yet still his PERSIA boasts her NADIR's name,
Whose genius rous'd her fallen sons to fame;
Still dear his memory to wild sons of war, 125
The ZUND, the SHAMLOO, and his own AFFSHAR[1].
Such, northern MEDIA, are the swarthy swains
Who roam in scatter'd bands thy rugged plains:
A hardy race, that like their sires of old,
Still brave the summer's heat, the winter's cold. 130
To them no joy the festive city brings,
They ask a verdant plain and healthful springs:
Such haply found, th' encampment[m] rude they raise,
And countless flocks around their dark tents graze:

These they commit to women and to age, 135
While other cares the martial youth engage.
In peace to train the steed, to urge the race,
Or ride the foremost in some glorious chase;
In war to deal with rapid force the blow,
T' enrich the tribe with plunder of the foe: 140
Or, when internal faction shakes the land,
To sweep the country in a desp'rate band.
These are the deeds that fill their restless life,
And mark them sons of rapine and of strife.
Such, ATTILA, the bands thy valour led, 145
When from thy sword degenerate ROMANS fled:
'Twas such with force resistless CHENGIZ bore
From utmost CHINA to the CASPIAN shore:
From VOLGA's banks to GUNGA's sacred flood
Wafted their TIMOUR[n] in a stream of blood. 150
When want impels, and genius is their guide,
Vain is th' attempt to stem the furious tide.
But soon success subdues the savage breast,
His warlike toil is chang'd for peaceful rest:

And sunk in sloth the gorg'd barbarian lies, 155
For the next daring foe an easy prize.

What colours can the PERSIAN Chief describe?
A slave at court, a tyrant in his tribe:
Oft in the city, bound by Pleasure's spell,
Far from his followers rude he loves to dwell; 160
Yet prompt to use their strength in faction's cause,
To live superior to restraint and laws
No gen'rous feelings warm his selfish breast,
He stands alone, oppressing, and oppress'd:
At times he trembles at his Monarch's frown; 165
At others, daring tries to grasp the crown.
In every change his tribe confess his sway;
By birth their Chief, their pride is to obey:
But power debas'd no noble object knows,
Weak is his band against it's country's foes: 170
No sacred union spreads the general flame,
Where all are strangers to the Patriot's name:
And oft, when foreign danger threatens near,
Will base-born Discord raise her guilty spear;

And those who should their country's wall have stood,
Show sabres redden'd with their brothers' blood.

Near where HYRCANIA's lofty mountains rise,
And proud DUMAVEND[o] seems to touch the skies;
Near where fam'd RHE[p] in ancient glory shone,
Has PERSIA's Monarch fix'd his splendid throne: 180
Not led by choice to plant his seat of power,
Where southern zephyrs fan the scented bower;
But forc'd 'mid northern hills to hold his sway,
That savage tribes may tremble and obey[q]:
In thee, TEHERAUN, we wondering now behold 185
That gorgeous state which SUSA knew of old;
The palace rich, with curious gildings wrought,
The beauteous fair, from every region brought;
Bright heaps of gold; of gems a countless store,
Which NADIR's sword from plunder'd DEHLY[r] bore;
A court obsequious to its King's command, 191
His crown defended by a princely band:
While every fate hangs on his royal breath,
His smile is fortune, and his frown is death.

The summits gain'd to which bold Chiefs aspire, 195
And plum'd Ambition has his heart's desire [s];
Mark well what joy the lofty pageant knows,
And learn the good tyrannic power bestows:
Soon his pall'd taste is turn'd from Pleasure's stream,
His eye averted shuns gay splendour's beam; 200
To every social tie of man unknown,
Wrapt in himself the Despot sits alone,
Dreaded by all, and yet of all afraid,
Around his throne see Terror's train array'd;
His demon guards are Envy, Rage, and Hate, 205
And balanc'd factions poise the wavering state:
Vile upstart slaves are rais'd on Fortune's wheel,
And trembling nobles to the minions kneel [t]:
But both are doom'd to prove the varying mood,
Their happiest days oft close in scenes of blood. 210
And he, whose breath the hour of fame bestows,
Or from the height th' ambitious victim throws,
If, 'midst the storm of power, his troubl'd breast
With a short gleam of joy is ever blest,

'Tis like the ray that darts through angry skies, 215
Or the red flash that thwart the tempest flies.

Far from this scene we homeward shape our way,
And o'er CARDUCHIA's [u] barren mountains stray:
Rude are her sons, with habits still the same
As when they swell'd the GRECIAN Hero's fame; 220
Who, fir'd with martial glory, led his band
O'er these rough mountains to the COLCHIAN strand,
Defeating all who dar'd his march oppose,
And safe retreating through a world of foes.
Plac'd 'twixt two jarring realms, CARDUCHIA stands
The mountain bulwark of opposing lands: 226
And tho' to plunder more inclin'd than toil,
Her savage soldier loves his rugged soil;
And oft amidst his native hills is seen
The smiling valley cloth'd in lovely green. 230
Thy waves, JAGHATTY [w], freshen every dale,
From SENNA's mountains to MARAGA's vale:
May every blessing rest upon thy stream,
Which to my fancy gave a rapt'rous dream:

Like the sweet Esk it burst upon my view, 235
Its banks, its willows, and its waters blue.
Wrapt in a cloud of years past joys appear,
Which distance renders to the soul more dear.
But they are gone who wont those joys to share,
Who gave me birth, and made my youth their care.
Blest parent shades! if, taught by you, I've tried
To walk through life, with Virtue as my guide;
If in my Country's cause I e'er have prov'd
What your hearts wish'd to see the son you lov'd;
To you belongs what little worth I've shown, 245
Yours all the good; the errors all my own.
O! if to me the wond'rous power was given
To frame "wing'd words," that lift the soul to heaven,
Then in full stream my verse should pour along,
And names ador'd should mingle with the song; 250
Those visions sweet that waking thoughts employ,
And come in dreams to promise future joy,
Should live embodied in the kindling line,
And strains of loftiest note should yield to mine.

Unblest the man whose cold unfeeling heart 255
Ne'er knew the glow that sacred ties impart!
E'en 'mid these scenes, where lawless deeds prevail,
See virtuous love tyrannic power assail,
To the torn heart a healing balm afford,
And raise, at Nature's call, the vengeful sword. 260

Near to JAGHATTY's banks, as records tell,
In SOOKMAN's Vale did fair SELIMAH[x] dwell:
Her husband SELIM rul'd the country round,
Till his fierce brother gave a fatal wound.
Ere the last ray of that pale moon was gone, 265
Whose early beams on OMAR's treason shone,
To light bright HYMEN's torch the murderer came,
At the dim lamp[y] that shed funereal flame;
And well his tongue had shap'd the artful tale,
Meant o'er thy heart, SELIMAH, to prevail. 270
The mourning widow patient seem'd to hear,
With smiles assum'd she chas'd each gushing tear.
Glad OMAR bids the nuptial feast prepare,
And all his Chiefs are call'd his joy to share.

The day arrives, he comes in rich attire, 275
To meet the object of his soul's desire :
But, ere his hand profane pollutes the bride,
From his false heart warm flows the purple tide :
A faithful servant dealt the fatal blow,
And at SELIMAH's feet laid OMAR low. 280
Swift where the Chiefs were seated flew the fair,
Unveil'd her face, and loose her flowing hair :
High in her arms she bore a beauteous boy,
The infant SELIM — now her only joy : —
" Here (she exclaim'd) your lawful Ruler view ; 285
" A hallow'd sword his father's murderer slew.
" But not from you do I require support,
" I take my son to great AMURATH's court."
She spoke, nor brook'd reply ; but, swift as thought,
In proud BYZANTIUM fam'd AMURATH sought : 290
A royal grant confirm'd her son's command,
Who long and prosperous rul'd the happy land :
And, midst her native wilds, enshrin'd by fame,
In every bosom lives SELIMAH's name.

But now CARDUCHIA's clustering hills are past, 295
Where autumn's breath is chill'd by winter's blast [z];
On MEDIA's plains a gentler clime we prove,
And trace fam'd scenes of glory and of love:
Here the bold sculptor bids the mountain's side
Speak ROME's disgrace, and lofty SAPOR's pride [a]: 300
There the wild effort of FERHAD [b] is seen,
Piercing through rocks to gain his lov'd SHEREEN;
Just as the labour of his life was o'er,
A fiend exclaim'd—"Thy mistress is no more!"
Frantic a moment on the cliff he stood, 305
Then headlong sprung, and stain'd the earth with blood.
On the same spot the first of tulips [c] grew,
And hence, as poets tell, it's sanguine hue:
Hence too, they say, it bears the goblet's form,
As the best refuge from life's angry storm. 310

Hapless FERHAD, betray'd by falsehood's breath,
SHEREEN yet lives, whom thou pursu'st through death.
But yet, fond maniac, thy sad lot is blest,
Compar'd with her's who robb'd thy soul of rest [d].

Lo! 'mid the cloud of war, with coward fear, 315
Her royal lover flies the ROMAN [e] spear;
A glorious end in battle's front he flies,
And by a son's inhuman dagger dies!—
Where's the base crowd that wont his smiles to wait?
No flatterers mourn a fallen Monarch's fate. 320
But she approaches—she his heart held dear,
Escapes his murd'rer's love, and joins his bier.
She comes, to part no more.—That bleeding breast
Gives what she sought:—Her spirit is at rest.
In that low vault, 'mid ruin'd piles scarce seen, 325
Sleep mighty KHUSROO, and his lov'd SHEREEN.

These fabl'd scenes we leave, the hills we gain,
Which threat'ning hang o'er BAGDAD's sultry plain:
Here dwells the outlaw, cruel robbers here
Lurk safe from power, and whet the murd'rous spear.
Curs'd be their haunts, and curs'd the treach'rous crew,
Who here my gallant friends [f] to murder drew!
With smiles they came, requir'd protection gave:
Alas! 'tis easy to deceive the brave:

True courage never dreads the secret blow; 335
Cowards alone can match th' assassin foe.

While yet my heart dwells on the mournful theme,
I view, dark TIGRIS, thy slow winding stream:
Through desert plains thy waters smoothly glide,
And many a ruin's shadowed in thy tide; 340
Of royal CTESIPHON one arch remains,
SELUCIA[g] vast has mingled with thy plains;
And the proud city which thy Caliphs rais'd,
In former days by every poet prais'd:
Thy fam'd BAGDAD, a wonder now no more, 345
Degraded stands upon thy widow'd shore:
Upon thy banks, where Monarchs lov'd to stray,
The wandering ARAB lurks to seize his prey:
And where gay palaces enrich'd the scene,
Nought but the robbers' scattered tents are seen: 350
Useless thy stream to industry or taste;
Man's labour here is to increase the waste.

Far from such scenes we fly, fill'd is each sail;
We leave BALSORAH with a favouring gale:

Rob'd in a fleecy cloud, lo! Hope appears, 355
Her throne is air, her reign our future years:
The sweet enchantress waves her magic wand,
We look delighted on our native land:
Her heavenly rays on memory's mirror gleam;
Behold reflected youth's delightful dream. 360
Each early scene to life's first morning dear,
From mirth's wild sallies, or affection's tear,
Like gilded clouds along a summer sky,
Across the mind in swift succession fly.
We fondly gaze till our rapt bosoms glow 365
With the pure flame that mystic sages[h] know;
When, by abstraction's power, the soul takes flight,
And darkness leaves, to visit realms of light.

Hail, visions bright! ye come alone to those
Within whose breast the patriot passion glows: 370
Oft in a distant land, and lonely hour,
My wearied mind has prov'd your magic power:
For still, though doom'd to tread a foreign shore,
My country's image in my heart I wore.

So, 'mid the storms of life, when ills assail, 375
And the frail vessel's shatter'd by the gale,
Th' immortal soul to scenes celestial turns;
To join its God with sacred ardour burns;
Looks past this world to find its place of rest,
And seeks the Heaven that's imag'd in the breast.

NOTES.

NOTE [a], p. 3. l. 39, 40.

> FERDOSI'S *song, and sculptur'd rocks, still tell,*
> *How* RUSTUM *conquer'd, and how* SOHRAB *fell.*

FERDOSI, who lived in the fourth century of the Mahomedan era, is the first of Persian poets. He is the author of the "Shah Nameh, or Book of Kings;" a noble epic poem; which, independent of its poetical merit, contains the only facts the Persians have of the more early periods of their history. It is formed from some fragments of the Chronicles of the Kings of Persia, a Work which is noticed in Scripture, and which we are told by the Grecian author CTESIAS, existed when he was at the court of ARTAXERXES MNEMON.

RUSTUM is the chief hero in the "Sha Nameh," and the tale of his combat with SOHRAB, his unknown son, whom he slew, is perhaps one of the finest passages in Persian poetry. FERDOSI has exerted his utmost powers to render this story tender and pathetic. He emphatically terms it, in an introductory line,

> "Ekee dastan pur ab-e cheshem."
>
> "A tale full of the waters of the eye."

NOTE [b], p. 3. l. 41, 42.

How great JEMSHEED *all other Kings outshone,*
Who tried on earth to raise a heavenly throne.

JEMSHEED is one of the fabulous Kings of Persia, and the founder of PERSEPOLIS, which is called TUKHT-E-JEMSHEED; or, THE THRONE OF JEMSHEED. To this Monarch Persians impute the origin of civilization, of the sciences, of the arts, and of the luxuries of life. He possessed, they add, a resplendent cup, or rather mirror, in which he saw, at one glance, every thing in the creation. Almost all the sculpture at PERSEPOLIS is connected with the fabulous history of this King, who, we are told, tried to make his throne celestial, and proclaimed himself a god. His impiety was punished by the loss of his power and life; and to this great sin is attributed the subsequent destruction of PERSEPOLIS, which was "The Mansion of his pride."

NOTE [c], p. 3. l. 47, 48.

Tho' fair SHIRAZ *each gaudy charm displays,*
She mourns, like thee, the fame of former days.

SHIRAZ is situated in the centre of a fertile valley, which is watered by a number of small, but pure rivulets. This city enjoys a delightful temperature, and its environs are crowded with beautiful and luxuriant gardens. It has more than once been a royal capital. It is still populous, but is at present only the residence of the Ruler of the Province of FARS.

NOTE [d], p. 3. l. 53, 54.

To wildest notes his harp her HAFIZ *strung,*
And sweet his music as the flowers he sung.

HAFIZ is termed by Europeans the Anacreon of the East; and the term appears to me appropriate; for though his countrymen defend the sanctity of his character as a devotee, and declare that his poetry is mystical, his odes are continually read and sung as an incitement to pleasure, and every Mahomedan that deviates from the KORAN by indulgence in wine, quotes, in excuse, a stanza from this favourite poet. The Works of HAFIZ are very popular with his countrymen, and it is rare to see a Persian of any learning that cannot repeat the greater part of his odes.

HAFIZ lived during his whole life at SHIRAZ, where his tomb is the constant resort of the young and the gay, as well as the aged. A fine copy of his Works is kept here, and is consulted as oracular by his admirers. The person desiring to know his fortune, first invokes HAFIZ by the ringlets of his mistress to speak truth, then shutting his eyes, he opens the book, and the first stanza at the seventh page is deemed oracular. His countrymen are fond of relating the first occasion upon which this was done. HAFIZ had, they say, when he died, many disciples, who conceived him a pattern of virtue. These contended he was a Sooffee, or Philosophical Devotee, and that all his poems were mystical; but his enemies, at the head of whom were the Moullahs, or Orthodox Priests of the Mahomedans, said he was an infidel, and that

his Works were seductive and wicked. These latter insisted he was not entitled to the religious rites of burial. It was at last agreed, that the dispute should be terminated by consulting his Dewan, or Book of Odes, in the manner described. The Heaven-directed finger fell on the following distich :—

> " Kuddum dureegh mudar z januzee HAFIZ;
> Agerchee ghuruk gunah bashud meruved ba behesht."

> " O! turn not your steps from the obsequies of HAFIZ;
> Though immersed in sin, he will rise into Paradise."

The triumph of the friends of HAFIZ was complete, and his remains were deposited with all due honours in the tomb.

NOTE [e], p. 4. l. 55, 56.

In beauteous robes, by SADI'S *hand array'd,*
Truth show'd her form, and Monarchs woo'd the Maid.

SADI is equally admired as a writer of prose and poetry: he may justly be called the moralist of his country. I cannot convey a better idea of the light in which his countrymen consider SADI, than by repeating a conversation I had with a very learned and intelligent Persian. I asked him if, besides the Koran, they had any laws? He replied: " Laws — no; but we have the maxims of SADI." — The character and sublimity of the lessons this poet has given to kings may be judged from the following stanza:

> " Rahim koon ou bee fouj dir tuscheer bash:
> Dilhace aullumghir ou shahee aullumgheer bash."

> " Be merciful, and learn to conquer without an army:
> Seize the hearts of the world, and be acknowledged its legitimate sovereign."

SADI was born in the year 1175, and lived till he was upwards of an hundred. He tells us, in a beautiful stanza, that years had not deprived him of youth.

> " Burfpeeree meneshenund bur serum,
> Hemchunan tubaem jouanee kunnud."
>
> " The snow of age rests upon my head,
> Yet my disposition still makes me young."

NOTE [f], p. 4. l. 59.

> LO! ISFAHAN, *of faded splendour vain.*

This noble city, which was once twenty-four miles round, and contained six hundred thousand inhabitants, is built upon the river Zainderood, over which there are several magnificent bridges. It was the capital of Persia in the most prosperous days that country ever enjoyed; and no city in the East can boast more splendid palaces. Many of these are now in ruins, and none are inhabited. But though ISFAHAN has ceased to be the residence of Kings, it continues to be the first commercial and manufacturing city in Persia, and has, even at this period, a population amounting to near two hundred thousand souls.

NOTE [g], p. 5. l. 78.

> *By chiefs encircled, glorious* ABBAS *sat.*

ABBAS was the most powerful of all the Princes of the Suffavean dynasty, and to him ISFAHAN owed almost all its grandeur.

NOTE [h], p. 5. l. 85, 86.

> *Pleas'd we survey those silver portals wide,*
> *Which grace thy College with their massy pride.*

The large gates of the College of ISFAHAN are covered with

plates of silver; and these have become more remarkable from being the only ornament of value belonging to any public building in this city, which was not plundered and destroyed by the Affghans, when they took it in 1723.

NOTE [i], p. 6. l. 97.

A falling dynasty had weigh'd thee down.

The picture that follows of ISFAHAN, of the state of Persia, and of the celebrated conqueror NADIR SHAH, (better known to Europeans by the name of THAMAS KOULI KHAN,) is strictly true. It refers, indeed, to one of those remarkable epochs when even the language of poetry is unable to convey an adequate idea of real events. The horrors brought upon this city by the Affghans exceed all belief. More than two hundred thousand of the inhabitants either perished by famine, or were massacred.

NOTE [k], p. 6. l. 104.

Is NADIR'S *shout, that calls thy sons to war.*

Persians describe the voice of NADIR as the Greeks do that of STENTOR, and say, the shout he was wont to give in battle used to give courage to his soldiers, and spread terror to the furthest ranks of his enemies.

NOTE [l], p. 7. l. 125, 126.

Still dear his memory to wild sons of war,
The ZUND, *the* SHAMLOO, *and his own* AFFSHAR.

These are the names of the principal of those wandering tribes who served in the army of NADIR. The ZUND are an

aboriginal tribe of Persia, and became famous from their Chiefs enjoying the throne of that kingdom for near fifty years after the death of that conqueror. The SHAMLOO and AFFSHAR, though long settled in Persia, are both tribes of Turkish descent, and NADIR himself was an AFFSHAR.

NOTE [m], p. 7. l. 133, 134.

Such haply found, th' encampment rude they raise,
While numerous flocks around their dark tents graze.

Nothing can be more rude than the encampment of the ELLIATS, or wandering tribes of Persia. Their tents, which are hardly a defence from the weather, are always of a black, or dark brown colour, and hence these tribes are known by the appellation of Sea Chaderee, or "Men of the Dark Tents."

NOTE [n], p. 8. l. 149, 150.

From VOLGA'S *banks to* GUNGA'S *sacred flood,*
Wafted their TIMOUR *in a stream of blood.*

TIMOUR is better known to the European reader by the name of TAMERLANE, a corruption of Timour-lung, which signifies Timour the lame, an appellation given to him from his being lame from his youth. TIMOUR has been portrayed by many poets and some historians, as wise, generous, and humane; but he does not merit this character: he was one of the greatest soldiers and one of the worst Monarchs that ever existed. There perhaps never was a Prince in the world who destroyed so many of his fellow-creatures.

NOTE [o], p. 10. l. 178.

And proud DUMAVEND *seems to touch the skies.*

This lofty mountain is situated about thirty miles from Teheraun. It stands in that great range (sometimes called the Caucasus) which separates Hyrcania from ancient Media, or the modern province of Irak from that of Mazenderan. The range of the Caucasus, though covered with snow, appears like a hillock at the base of the Peak of Dumavend.

NOTE [p], p. 10. l. 179.

Near where fam'd RHE *in ancient glory shone.*

The site of the ancient Rhe or Rhages, is within a few miles of Teheraun. There are hardly any remains now left of this city, which was once the capital of the empire. It stood low, and was always deemed unhealthy. A poet of Persia, alluding to its bad climate, exclaims: — "At the break of day I met the Angel of Death. Where art thou going?" I demanded. "Flying with speed," said he, "from the unwholesome morning dews of the city of Rhe."

NOTE [q], p. 10. l. 183, 184.

But forc'd 'mid northern hills to hold his sway,
That savage tribes may tremble and obey.

Teheraun was made the capital of his kingdom by Aga

Mahomed Khan, the uncle and predecessor of the present King, because it is situated in the centre of those extensive plains in which the tribes on whose support he chiefly depended for maintaining the crown fed their flocks. It is supposed a body of twenty-five thousand horse can be assembled there at any period of the year within five days. If the King resided at Shiraz or Isfahan, he would be removed at a great distance from these tribes, and exposed to danger from their fidelity being corrupted by any governor he might appoint over the northern provinces of his dominions.

NOTE [r], p. 10. l. 190.

Which NADIR'S *sword from plunder'd* DEHLY *bore.*

The jewels now possessed by the King of Persia were almost all brought from DEHLY by NADIR SHAH, in his celebrated invasion of India, in 1739. Among these, a diamond called the "durrceah-e-noor," or "sea of light," is one of the largest and most valuable in the world.

NOTE [s], p. 11. l. 195, 196.

The summits gain'd to which bold Chiefs aspire,
And plum'd Ambition has his heart's desire.

The picture that follows is that of the condition of the absolute Monarch of Persia, not that of the present King, who is comparatively a mild and humane sovereign.

NOTE [t], p. 11. l. 207, 208.

Vile upstart slaves are rais'd on Fortune's wheel,
And trembling nobles to the minions kneel.

In Persia the only real nobility are the Chiefs of the military tribes. These are seldom or ever made ministers of state: their actual strength, from the attachment of their followers, is too great to admit of its being increased by ministerial power. The high offices of state are therefore generally given to men of ability, but of low birth, who are consequently without any adherents that can prevent their being cast down at the pleasure of their royal master.

NOTE [u], p. 12. l. 218, 219, 220.

And o'er CARDUCHIA'S *barren mountains stray :*
Rude are her sons, with habits still the same
As when they swell'd the GRECIAN *Hero's fame.*

The ancient CARDUCHIA, the modern KURDISTAN, is literally one cluster of hills; and in that part of it through which the British mission passed in 1810, no mountains can be more barren. Xenophon passed through a tract of this province in his celebrated retreat; and the modern traveller finds that a lapse of twenty centuries has made no change in the manners and appearance of its inhabitants.

NOTE [w], p. 12. l. 231, 232.

Thy waves, JAGHATTY, *freshen every dale,*
From SENNA'S *mountains to* MARAGA'S *vale.*

The fine stream of the JAGHATTY rises near SENNA, the small capital of a Waly, or Prince of Kurdistan, and flows through the fertile valley of MARAGA, a beautiful town in Aderbijan, celebrated as the residence, during his latter years, of the famous Hulakoo, the grandson of Chengiz, and the destroyer of the Caliphs of Bagdad.

NOTE [x], p. 14. l. 261, 262.

Near to JAGHATTY'S *banks, as records tell,*
In SOOKMAN'S *Vale did fair* SELIMAH *dwell.*

The tale of SELIMAH is founded on truth. It is given in the History of Kurdistan, written by Sherriff-u-deen, who was a cotemporary of the lady whom he celebrates. This author writes in the year of the Hejree 1005, (two hundred and twenty-three years ago). He is in general very dull; but the story of the Khatoon-e-SOOKMAN, or the Lady of SOOKMAN, who was both a countrywoman and a cotemporary, quite animates him. He styles her Khatoon-e-Sheer-dill, or the Lady with the Lion's heart.

NOTE [y], p. 14. l. 267, 268.

To light bright HYMEN'S *torch the murderer came,*
At the dim lamp that shed funereal flame.

It is the custom of the Mahomedans in Persia, as in other parts of the East, to keep lamps burning at the tombs of the deceased. These are in general very dim, and serve less to illuminate than to cast an additional gloom upon the sepulchre.

NOTE [z], p. 16. l. 295, 296.

But now CARDUCHIA'S *clustering hills are past,*
Where autumn's breath is chill'd by winter's blast.

The cold in this country is, from its elevation, very severe. When the camp of the British mission which visited Persia in 1810, was pitched on the plain of Hubatoo, which lies in about 37° of north lat., and is situated near the centre of Kurdistan, the water kept in the tents froze during the night of the 17th of August, and the wandering tribes who had fed their flocks there for three months of the summer were preparing to move.

NOTE [a], p. 16. l. 299, 300.

Here the bold sculptor bids the mountain's side
Speak ROME'S *disgrace, and lofty* SAPOR'S *pride.*

On the face of a rock near Kermanshah are some of the finest remains in sculpture to be found in Persia. Among these,

the figure of SAPOR the Second is represented as standing upon the body of a Roman soldier, which is in this piece of sculpture made the type of the prostrate condition of the Empire. SAPOR gained several victories over the Emperor Constantius; was defeated by Julian; but, after his death, repelled the Romans, and forced the Emperor Jovian to sign a shameful peace, by which Persia regained all the provinces that Rome had before conquered, and several others.

NOTE [b], p. 16. l. 301, 302.

There the wild effort of FERHAD *is seen,*
Piercing through rocks to gain his lov'd SHEREEN.

The story of FERHAD and SHEREEN is one of the most celebrated in Persian Romance. The beautiful SHEREEN was the favourite mistress of Khusroo-Purveez, the most luxurious and magnificent of all the Monarchs of the Sassanian dynasty: but she is said to have given that heart, for which her Sovereign sighed, to his lowly rival FERHAD. Khusroo, we are told, knew of their love; and wishing to place an inseparable obstacle to their union, he required of FERHAD a task that he deemed impossible: he bade him deserve his mistress by piercing through a lofty mountain near Kermanshah, that he might bring a stream that flowed beyond it to fertilize a fine valley. The enthusiastic lover accepted the condition; and the Persians still point to his great labours. They add, that when his task was nearly over, the King trembled lest he

should lose SHEREEN, and sent a person, whom FERHAD believed his friend, to inform him his mistress was dead. The lover, the moment he heard this account, threw himself headlong from the very summit of the rock, and was dashed to pieces.

NOTE [c], p. 16. l. 307—310.

On the same spot the first of tulips grew,
And hence, as poets tell, its sanguine hue:
Hence too, they say, it bears the goblet's form,
As the best refuge from life's angry storm.

This idea is taken from the Persian of Hafiz; and the last two lines are a free translation of the following stanza in an ode of that poet:

"Mugur ke lala be danust be wuffahee daher
Ke tau nijad ou beshud jaum my z kuf na nahad."

Which may be verbally translated:

"Perhaps the tulip was acquainted with the ingratitude of fortune;
Therefore, while it lives, it allows not the goblet of wine to pass from its hand."

NOTE [d], p. 16. l. 313, 314.

But yet, fond maniac, thy sad lot is blest,
Compar'd with hers who robb'd thy soul of rest.

The Persian poet who recounts this fable has made a

distinction between the love with which SHEREEN inspired KHUSROO PURVEEZ, and the madness of FERHAD.

> " Leb-e-SHEREEN-choon be shukker rez be kushad,
> Dil-uz-PURVEEZ-burd-ou-jan ze FERHAD."

> " When the beauteous SHEREEN opened her honied lips,
> She stole the heart of PURVEEZ, and the soul of FERHAD."

NOTE [e], p. 17. l. 315, 316.

> *Lo! 'mid the cloud of war, with coward fear,*
> *Her royal lover flies the* ROMAN *spear.*

Khusroo had for twenty-four years been the most fortunate, as he was the most magnificent, of Monarchs. His troops overrun the Roman Empire; and a corps under one of his generals at Chalcedon insulted for twelve years the fallen fortunes of Constantinople. But he was doomed to a terrible reverse. The Emperor Heraclius not only drove his enemies from the territories of Rome, but invaded Persia, and attacked the famous capital of Dustajird, from which the coward Khusroo fled, accompanied only by his loved Shereen. He was soon afterwards slain by his favourite son, Sheroee, who, we are told, was deeply enamoured of Shereen. She begged, when he pressed his love, to be allowed one look at the murdered Khusroo: she was shown his corpse, and instantly stabbed herself. The story of the love of Khusroo and Shereen is celebrated by some of the best Persian poets; and their tale

has been rendered familiar to the English reader by the eloquent Gibbon.

NOTE [f], p. 17. l. 331, 332.

Curs'd be their haunts, and curs'd the treach'rous crew,
Who here my gallant friends to murder drew!

The two officers here alluded to were alike distinguished by their virtues, their courage, and talents. They were murdered within thirty miles of Bagdad, by a notorious chief of the tribe of Fylee, who had offered them his protection as they were travelling through the country he infested. They readily confided in him; for an instance of a faith so pledged being broken, (even among the barbarians to whom this horrid villain belonged,) had hardly ever been known.

NOTE [g], p. 18. l. 341, 342.

Of royal CTESIPHON *one arch remains,*
SELUCIA *vast has mingled with thy plains.*

These two great cities were situated on the Tigris, exactly opposite each other, at a distance of eighteen miles south of the modern Bagdad. The Tarik-e-kyser, or Arch of Khusroo, is the only building that now remains to convey to the traveller any idea of their former grandeur. It appears to be the ruin of a great temple, which presents a front of

three hundred feet in length, by one hundred and sixty in depth, having in its centre a vaulted hall, which is formed by an arch one hundred and six feet high, and eighty-five feet in the span.

NOTE [h], p. 19. l. 365—368.

We fondly gaze till our rapt bosoms glow
With the pure flame that mystic sages know;
When, by abstraction's power, the soul takes flight,
And darkness leaves, to visit realms of light.

Every one has heard of the dreams of the mystic sages of the East, who endeavour in a thousand different modes to attain a state of beatitude, by abstracting the soul from all earthly objects. This usage of tapassa, or abstraction of the soul from the contemplation of all sublunary objects till it is absorbed in the Divinity, has spread from India over all the nations of Asia; and the Persian Soofee, the Mahomedan Fakeer, and the Hindoo Joghee, or Sunnasee, vie with each other in efforts to subdue nature by rigid austerities. It is the habit of these ascetics to remain for days almost without food, with their minds fixed upon one object, pronouncing the mysterious name of God till they become inspired, or, rather, till they mistake the wanderings of imagination, which are the consequence of the sufferings of their emaciated bodies, for heavenly inspirations. These holy personages frequently fall

into trances; sometimes, perhaps, real, but more often feigned; and on their recovery they delight their disciples with the account of the rapture their soul has enjoyed during its temporary absence from its earthly tenement.

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